

NEMBUTSU

NEMBUTSU IN SHINRAN AND HIS TEACHERS

A COMPARISON

(2)

BY

SHINEI SHIGEFUJI

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CHAPTER IV

COMPARISON AND CONTRAST OF SHINRAN'S NEMBUTSU WITH THAT OF HIS ANTECEDENTS

(A) THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE NEMBUTSU

It is interesting to note how climate and natural surroundings influence the thought and mode of man. For instance, according to Dr. T. Watsuji, the cultural sphere of the world can be classified into three types: "(1) the monsoon-type-India and Southeast Asia; (2) the desert-type-Arabia and West Asia; and (3) the pastoral-type-Europe and others." The main characteristic of the monsoon-type culture, namely Indian culture, is its flexibility in accepting rather intolerable forces of nature. In order to fully understand Buddhism, it is important to remember the geographical and cultural characteristics of India and Eastern Asia. Buddhism stands in contrast to the religions of Asia Minor, i.e., Christianity, Judaism, and Islam. The religions of the desert-type tend to affirm a personal God who stands outside man and yet controls man. In India, however, such a personal God is rejected. Dr. Watsuji explains this further:

All except the religions of India, Christianity, Judaism, and Mohammedanism, are the products of the desert-type culture... The contribution made by the desert-type culture has reached its peak when they gave the personified God to mankind. The only other contribution which is comparable with theirs is that of the India who gave the idea of impersonal absolute to mankind.¹

In the study of religion two main types emerge: (1) the religion which affirms the existence of God(s) who stand(s) beyond and control(s) men, and (2) the religion(s) of India which denies such a dualistic approach and rather seeks the ultimate in a monistic approach. These types are fundamentally different and cannot be equated. The overriding characteristics of European thought are based on the dualistic relationship of man and God(s), and the geographical and climatic influences of nature cannot be ignored in understanding the religious imagery underlying this dualism.

The difference in these three types of natural and geographical

chimates is evidenced not only in their different religious traditions but also in the total range of cultural activities. People in the pastoral-type cultures stand against nature. They try to control and resist nature. The monsoon-type culture assumes quite an opposite position from that of the pastoral-type culture. It observes man within nature instead of regarding the two as separate. The position of standing against nature or conquering nature presupposes the position of separation and alienation of man from nature, and man from God(s). Self-affirmation is prerequisite for such a position. On the other hand, Eastern, and especially Indian thought, is based on self-negation.

In every aspect of cultural activity, Western thinking and Eastern thinking present contrasting characteristics. For example, we see contrasts between the two cultures in the fields of music and art. Whereas Western music is quite dynamic, Eastern music is rather quiet. The same can be said about art. These contrasting characteristics of Western and Eastern thinking become quite apparent in their respective language patterns. In the case of English, for instance, self-affirmation is obviously stressed in such a simple expression as "(I) thank you." A corresponding expression to "thank you" in Japanese is "arigatō"² meaning "difficult to be" or "difficult to be in this world," which obviously came from the idea of "everything is vicissitude" or "non-ego." In other words, the Japanese expression presupposes self-negation. To negate oneself is to be accepted by others. Therefore, it becomes an expression of gratitude. Even in language patterns the idea of self-affirmation seems to underlie Western thinking. Admittedly, Christianity denies egocentricity and emphasizes self-denial and self-sacrifice. Yet, as long as it affirms the transcendent Absolute and maintains an eternal cleavage between God and man, the Absolute is understood as "this" God or our God. In other words, God is "this" God of ours, and not of others. This is perhaps the reason why some theistic religions tend to become exclusive and intolerant. In such thinking there resides the rational ego which is always assertive and exclusive. In regard to the intolerance and exclusiveness of Western religions, Arnold Toynbee points out:

Since self-centeredness is innate in Human Nature, we are all inclined, to some extent, to assume that our own religion is the only true and right religion; that our own vision of Absolute Reality is the only authentic vision;

that we alone have received a revelation; that the truth which has been revealed to us is the whole truth; and that, in consequence, we ourselves are 'The Chosen People' and 'the Children of Light,' while the rest of the Human Race are gentiles sitting in darkness. Such pride and prejudice are symptoms of Original Sin, and they will therefore be ripe in some measure in any human being or community; but the measure varies, and it seems to be a matter of historical fact that, hitherto, the Judaic religions have been considerably more exclusive-minded than the Indian religions have... the spirit of the Indian religions, blowing where it listeth, may perhaps help to winnow a traditional Pharisaism out of Muslim, Christian, and Jewish hearts.³

Buddhism stands in contrast to the Judaic religions. It does not acknowledge an Absolute God beyond man. In a strict sense, it may be that the word "religion" does not apply to Buddhism. It is a characteristic of Buddha's teaching that it does not accept anything absolute and unchangeable. Even man is considered as a temporal existence. In regard to the difference between Buddhism and other religions, Nirvāṇa-sūtra states:

My disciples! There are two kinds of paths leading to the Enlightenment. One path is true and unchangeable, and the other path is changeable. Since there are two paths toward Enlightenment, there are two kinds of Nirvāṇa. One is true and unchangeable Nirvāṇa, and the other false and changeable. All other than the path of Buddha are changeable paths, and only the path of Buddha is unchangeable... Enlightenment sought outside is a changeable one, and Enlightenment within an unchangeable one.⁴

According to the above quotation, what differentiates Buddhism is that it seeks its end (Nirvāṇa) within, while others seek it without. In the case of Hinduism, the final goal is to release one's Atman from the boundary of desires and ignorance so that one will have direct communion with the Absolute Brahman. The same is true with the Original Buddhism, wherein the ultimate release from the suffering of life is

sought within, i.e., the Enlightenment. Therefore, Buddhism is often called the Way of Inner Transcendence. According to Dr. Nakamura, the Buddha is quoted as having said that the "only shelter from the fear of old age and death is not to possess anything, to possess nothing to hold on. This is best shelter I can give you. This is called Nirvāṇa, where old age and death are no longer a threat."⁵ Such a realization of Nirvāṇa is possible only through one's inner transcendence of self. This is what Buddha called "non-ego." The Buddha assumed no metaphysical position in His approach toward the problems of life. His concern was simply how to cope with the predicaments of life and how to transcend them in the immediate present. The *Suttanipata* states the following:

First of all Buddhism has no specific dogma as such. Gauthama refused to systematize the contents of His enlightenment, thus He used different approaches according to different situations. Therefore, people came up with many interpretations of His teachings later. Secondly, the fact that there is no specific dogma does not mean that He had no thought of His own. In spite of many interpretations of His enlightenment, they all imply one and the same thing, i.e., to seek the Nirvāṇa, the state of peace and tranquility, through deep insight into one's own nature and reality, not being fettered by any already established dogmas or theories. In other words, what the Buddha taught was the way in which one can realize the dharma as the law which man must observe as a practical being. Thirdly, the Buddha acknowledged that no law of man should be fixed, but should be flexible according to the situation where this concrete and living man finds himself in. This is where we find the ground which many sects, having based their different interpretations on the teachings of the Buddha have sprung out later. Also, this is the reason why we do not witness in any Buddhist countries any conflict between Buddhism and rationalism or science.⁶

We have previously noted that the word "Buddha-Dharma," rather than the word "Buddhism" clarifies the characteristics and teachings of

the Buddha. The reason for this is based on the Buddha's teachings regarding Dharma. Dharma is permanent and universal truth, regardless of the appearance or non-appearance of Buddha in the world.⁷ It is the ground which sustains all beings and the universe itself. It is not the truth which can be conceived as an abstract, metaphysical, or scientific truth from without. Dharma is the truth or universal ground which sustained Buddha and is sustaining our very being in the world. Dharma is the truth which is transcendent yet immanent. Therefore, "the Buddha's teachings are practical, instantaneous, and empirical."⁸ Dharma, as the universal truth, is true at all times and in all places. Therefore, it is transcendent and yet immanent, for its root "√dhṛ" means "to hold, bear, carry, maintain, preserve, keep, possess, have, use, employ," and so forth. Dharma is the ground which sustains our very being. It cannot be conceived without the world of relativity, yet as the ground which sustains the world of relativity, Dharma cannot be conceptualized or relativized. Hence, it must be absolute and dynamic. In this sense, Dharma does not become the object of our intellectual knowledge and is often called "beyond our understanding" (不可思議) in Buddhism. However, this does not mean that Dharma is something like Absolute God, who is omnipotent and omnipresent, Dharma, as immanent truth, cannot be conceived apart from the world of relativity, yet is the very ground which sustains relativity as relativity.

The content of Dharma which Buddha taught is known today as the "Pratītya samut-pāda"⁹ (緣起), "Origination by dependence of one thing on another," or, simply, the "chain of causation." It means that everything originates according to the law of cause and effect. Nothing can be absolute or permanent. It is like a chain which is made up of many rings depending upon each other. The Pratītya samut-pāda presupposes absolute negation of anything permanent or absolute. When applied to man, it becomes synonymous with the intellectualization of empirical self. Therefore, the Pratītya samut-pāda does not operate outside the world of relativity, but within it. It transcends the world of relativity, and yet becomes the very ground which sustains the world of relativity. This is why Dharma is called the immanent transcendent. What divides the inner from the outer is always self-craving ("I" consciousness), which mistakenly substantializes and absolutizes everything that is relative. In this way the self creates the world of Maya and the false self.

Therefore, Dharma presupposes absolute negation of this self and self-craving. As Dr. Nishida points out, however, "Self-denial is not possible through our own self, for our own self still asserts itself in absolute Self-denial. Yet, through death of our own Self, Self comes to know one's true Self. Therefore, Self is born to die eternal death."¹⁰ Self indulges itself in the world of relativity. It is the Self which found itself in Dharma which is absolute and transcendent, yet immanent and dynamic. This is the content of Buddha's Enlightenment.

What was taught by Buddha, however, became the indisputable authority for later followers. Perhaps, it is true of any religion that the original teachings of the founders (especially when they are incomparably great like Jesus or Buddha) tend to be accepted by their followers as unquestionably authoritative. This usually happens because of great respect toward the founders. After the death of Buddha, therefore, it was very natural that His followers tried to preserve and transmit His words as faithfully as possible. This tendency is still strong in Theravāda Buddhism today. For instance, the Āgama school of Theravāda Buddhism (the name "āgama" implies a traditional doctrine or precept¹¹) placed utmost importance on the exact words of the Buddha and tried to interpret His teachings word by word. In such an atmosphere, however, Buddhism assumed a somewhat authoritative and traditionally exclusive attitude.

The original teaching of the Buddha, as the Buddha-Dharma implies, was based on the Buddha's realization of Dharma-truth which transcends the duality of subject-object world. The concept of the Pratītya samut-pāda or the own-ego, therefore, must be understood only from the view of Dharmas as the transcendent, immanent truth which in fact sustains this very dualistic position of subject and object. Original Buddhism is just an opposite of dualistic position and views reality as it is by negating such dualistic position. In the Theravāda Buddhism, however, Dharma, the Pratītya samut-pāde, and the non-ego were viewed from a rather dualistic point of the subject-object relationship. In other words, the Dharma, the content of Buddha's Enlightenment, which is transcendent and immanent truth, has been objectivized from the dualistic point of view, and is understood as the truth without. This position is known as "人空法有身" or "我空法有," which means the "Self as non-being stands against the Dharma as being." In this case, the position

of the Mahāyāna, which is known as “煩惱即菩提” or “生死即涅槃”(meaning “enlightenment is inseparable from suffering” or “nirvāṇa is inseparable from the life-death”), is completely denied. Instead, the Nirvāṇa and the life-death, the Enlightenment and suffering, and the Buddha and devil are all conceived in a dualistic sense. In other words, the position of the original Buddhism which denied any dualistic interpretation of the world and sought a possible solution to the predicaments of man within man, is replaced by an idealistic view which is based on dualism. In this dualistic and idealistic system, the absolute and the infinite are conceived as contrasting to and standing against the relative and the finite, i.e., Nirvāṇa against Saṃsāra or Buddhahood against the Saṃhā world. In order to overcome this gap between the two, self-practice in the form of ascetic self-denial becomes necessary. In such a dualistic position, (which perhaps is an inevitable result of schematization) the true meaning of the Buddha’s teaching is lost and Buddhism becomes quite dogmatic and authoritative. Mahāyāna Buddhism, therefore, may be regarded as an attempt to restore the true meaning of the Buddha’s teaching.

(B) NEMBUTSU IN SHINRAN AND THE SEVEN MASTERS

Nāgārjuna is a most outstanding person in the tradition of Mahāyāna Buddhism. Indeed, he is often regarded as the second Śākyamuni who appeared in this world to restore the true meaning of the Dharma. His contribution towards restoring the true meaning of the Buddha’s teaching—a teaching which had become schematized and objectivized and had lost its original dynamic nature—is truly note-worthy. In fact his voluminous works mark the beginning of the Mahāyāna movement which influenced the whole history of Buddhism.

Through his voluminous works, such as *Mahāprajñāpāramitā upadēśa* (*Daichidoron* in Japanese, 100 volumes), *Mādhyamika-kārikā Sāstra* (*Chūron*, 4 volumes), *Dvādashadvāra Sāstra* (*Junimonron*, one volume), and *Daśabhūmi-Vibhāsa Sāstra*, (*Jūjubibasharon*, seventeen volumes), he influenced many Buddhists, both scholars and laymen. Shinran was no exception. In fact, Shinran owed his encounter with Nembutsu to Nāgārjuna, the first of the Seven Masters.

From an overall perspective of Nāgārjuna’s works, however, the Nembutsu was certainly not the central subject of his philosophy. Furthermore, according to Nāgārjuna, Amida did not occupy a central position, but instead, was only one of the many buddhas, present, past,

and future. Nāgārjuna treated the Nembutsu as only one among many practices that one can use to reach the state of Anuttara-samyaksambodhi. In a strict sense, Nāgārjuna did not use the word "Nembutsu"; he implied the meaning of the Nembutsu, which was later used by Shinran and others in the *Igyōbon*. Nāgārjuna states: "If a person recites the names of the Buddhas of ten quarters with sincerity, then he will reach the state of Anuttara-samyaksambodhi."¹²

Even in the *Igyōbon*, which is part of the *Dasabhūmi-Vibhāṣā Sāstra* (seventeen volumes) and which Shinran chose as a background of the tenet of Shin Buddhism, Nāgārjuna's main concern was with how to answer the questions of persons who looked for easy instead of difficult practices. As we read the *Igyōbon*, it is obvious that Nāgārjuna is dissatisfied with persons who looked for easy practices and openly criticizes them for their weakness and lack of courage. His severe, critical tone, however, changes suddenly, and he indicates a Way that is easy and within reach. This "Easy Practice," as Nāgārjuna calls it, is presented in such a manner, however, that it is suited only to those who have failed to observe the "Difficult Practices." Nāgārjuna's basic concern remains directed towards those who were mentally capable of practicing the "Difficult Way." The "Easy Practice" of Amida Buddha is a more or less secondary alternative intended only for those who were disqualified from the "Difficult Way." He points out that the truest of the "Easy Practices" must be the Way of Amida Buddha; therefore, "by reciting his name with sincerity of mind" (専心称名), one is led to the state of Anuttara-samyaksambodhi. He also explains the Nembutsu of the Other Power allegorically by comparing it to sailing on water in a boat, while the Difficult Way of the "Self-Power" is compared to traveling by land on foot.

It is interesting to note Nāgārjuna's sudden change of attitude from being severe and critical towards the weak (who confessed that they failed to follow the Way taught), to being understanding and sympathetic. Compared to his voluminous works on the exposition of his philosophy of Śūnyatā, his work on the Nembutsu-thought is rather fragmentary and short. He seems to have taken considerable effort, however, to expound the concept of the "Easy Practice" of the Nembutsu. Jōdo theologians claim that Nāgārjuna's seemingly inconsistent attitude may have been "the fruit of his actual awakening to man's impotence."¹³

In fact, Shinran understands that the gist of the *Igyōbon* is the Way of Faith as manifested in the Eighteenth Vow and hence is the Way of the Nembutsu.

In the *Kyō-gyō-shin-shō*, Shinran quotes from Nāgārjuna's *Igyōbon* quite frequently, but his interpretation is intended to reveal its kerygma by means of an existential hermeneutic. For instance, in the *Igyōbon*, Nāgārjuna presents a twofold classification of the teachings of the Buddha. He writes: "Although there are numerable ways in the teachings of the Buddha, they can be classified roughly: the Difficult Way and the Easy Way."¹⁴ If anyone wishes to reach Avaivartika in this life and attain Anuttara-samyaksambodhi, then he should "think of" (念) the buddhas of the ten quarters and recite their names (称名). There are, he continues, the Buddha Amitābha in the West, the Buddha Konakamana of the past, and many other present buddhas. It is explicit here that Nāgārjuna considered the Nembutsu simply as one way of practice among others. Furthermore, the Nembutsu was meant "to think of" the buddhas and "to recite" the names of the Buddhas, and was never directed towards Amida Buddha alone but towards many bodhisattvas.

In the next chapter Nāgārjuna comments on the Buddha of Eternal Life, His vow, and the Nembutsu. Shinran, however, takes this passage very seriously and considers it as the tenet of Nembutsu-thought. From this standpoint he rereads and rearranges many works of Nāgārjuna's passage reads as follows:

There were Buddha Lokeśvararāja (... Nāgārjuna lists one hundred seven names of the buddhas altogether here). All these buddhas at present are in the Pure Lands of the ten quarters. They pronounce His name and meditate upon the Vow of Amida Buddha, which states: 'If anyone meditates on Me, recites My Name, and believes in Me, then he would immediately enter into the Avaivartika, and attain the Anuttara-samyaksambodhi.'¹⁵

In the *Kyō-gyō-shin-shō*, Shinran claims that the utterance of the Name is the supreme and truly splendid Right Act, and the Right Act is the Nembutsu; the Nembutsu is "Namu Amida Butsu," so "Namu Amida Butsu" is the Right Meditation.¹⁶ After this statement, Shinran quotes from Vasubandhu's work, the *Jōdoron*, which states:

The sūtras tell the virtues true,

By which have I now this gāthā,
 I summarize and tell aright
 The Way of that Tathāgata.
 Believing in His Vow and power,
 None, not yet saved, e'er pass away.
 Well and at once fill in the flood
 In that wonderful Virtue's Bay.¹⁷

Again the *Jōdoron* states :

...the bodhisattva, entering through the four gates, perfects his act of 'Self-Help' (自利). This we ought to know. The bodhisattva comes out through the fifth gate and completes his act of the 'Help-to-others' (利他) by transferring his own merit to others. This we ought to know. Thus, the bodhisattva, by practicing the works of Five Gates, completes both the act of the 'Self-Help' and the 'Help-to-others.' As the result of having completed both of the acts, the bodhisattva at once attains the Anuttara-samyaksaṃbodhi.¹⁸

Shinran interpreted Vasubandhu's works from the perspective of emphasizing Amida Buddha, who reveals His merits through the Nembutsu of the Original Vow. Shinran consequently selected the above gāthās and passages from the *Jōdoron*, which corresponded to his understanding of the true spirit of the Buddha and His teaching.

In the above passage (which Shinran quoted in his *Kyō-gyō-shin-shō* Vasubandhu speaks of the Five Gates for the bodhisattva. In the previous passage, however, Vasubandhu explains the virtues of practicing the "Five Spiritual Gates" (五念門), which are designed for good men and women. He raises the question, "How do we meditate and how do we obtain faith?"¹⁹ He answers it, saying, "If a good man or woman practices the Five Spiritual Gates successfully, then he or she will unfailingly be born in the Pure Land and be able to see Amida Buddha. Then he explains each of the Five Spiritual Gates. They are (1) the "Gate of Worsip," (2) the "Gate of Praise," (3) the "Gate of Aspiration," (4) the "Gate of Perception," and (5) the "Gate of Merit Transference." These Five Gates, however, should not be taken exclusively, but should be understood as practices by which sentient beings try to reach the Enlightenment. For instance, regarding the Nembutsu in terms of the

“Shōmyō”(the recitation of the Name), he asserts: “We praise the Name of Tathāgata Amida just as His wisdom’s light directs us to do and just as His Name signifies, and practicing the Way as truly as it is signified, we desire to be in accord therewith.”²⁰ These “Five Spiritual Gates” are intended to be the practices of men and women. He then for the first time introduces the “Five Gates”(五種門), which are designed as the practices of the bodhisattva. Venerable Vasubandhu has obviously designated the “Five Spiritual Gates” and the “Five Gates” to two different qualities of people, namely, ordinary men and the bodhisattvas. Shinran, on the other hand, ignores these classifications and interprets the whole passage from the view of Amida Buddha. He maintains that the passage points to the way in which Bodhisattva Dharmākara, after having practiced these “Five Gates” transferred His merits in the form of the Nembutsu, “Namu Amida Butsu,” to all sentient beings.

Donran(T’an-luan) in the *Ōjōronchū* contends that there are two paths in Buddhist teaching: the “difficult” and the “easy.” He claims that the “difficult” path is hard to follow because we live in the period of the “Zōbō,”²¹ or the period of Semblance Dharma, when it is extremely difficult to attain the Avaivartika through our self-power. On the other hand, the easy path is easy to follow, because everything depends on the Vow of Amida Buddha. Thus, he expounds the idea of the “Other Power” throughout his works. He makes it very clear that the reason the Buddha came into this world and disclosed His teaching was to reveal His Name which contains all merits for salvation. This is why, according to Donran, all beings (who are none other than those immersed in evil and sin—the lowest of the lowest grade) can be born into the Pure Land at the very moment that they place single-hearted faith in Him. And this faith, he maintains, comes from Amida Buddha. That is to say, salvation does not originate from within us but comes from without. Donran’s interpretation of the “Other Power” is quite revolutionary and is contrary to the traditional interpretation of the time. Before Donran, it was believed that the Buddha’s teachings are the ways Buddha gave to sentient beings, and it is strictly up to the individual whether or not he follows the ways. Donran reversed this thinking by professing that it is not we who seek the ways but Amida Buddha who seeks us,

We begin to feel Donran’s deep sense of existential despair and

eschatological awareness which convinced him of the "Other Power" of Amida Buddha, which is immanently dynamic. In the time of "Zōbō" the salvation of sin-ridden mortals is only possible through the "Other Power" of Amida Buddha. Donran's concept of the "Other Power" was later developed into Shinran's idea of the "Nembutsu-only," but in Donran's work we find the very basis of the Nembutsu school. It is no wonder, therefore, that Shinran felt a deep sense of obligation and respect towards Donran, and even named himself "Shinran" (with the final name "Donran").

Immediately after quoting from Donran's *Ōjōronchū*, Shinran quotes Dōshaku's (Tao-ch'o) *Anrakushū*. In the *Anrakushū*, Dōshaku introduces the idea of the "Path of Sages" (Shōdōmon 聖道門) and the "Path of the Pure Land" (Jōdomon 浄土門), and contends that so-called common mortals can only attain Enlightenment by the "Path of the Pure Land."

The idea of common mortals is stressed throughout Dōshaku's works. The idea of common mortals was brought up by Donran, and it becomes a key word in Shinran's thought. According to Donran common mortals are none other than those who embody the lowest form of life of the lowest grade and who have committed various evil deeds.²² Dōshaku, being convinced that he is such a common mortal, raises the question. "How can beings with weak constitution hope to expect the fruit of Nirvāṇa? Are they to be excluded from Nirvāṇa and Light?" He answers in the negative. Śākyamuni disclosed the *Kammuryōjukyō* and revealed the Eighteenth Vow precisely so such sin-ridden common mortals will be saved through the Nembutsu.

The idea of common mortals must be viewed from the existential situation, for it does not reject the historical foundation of Buddhism nor the possibility of attaining Enlightenment by cultivating one's bodhi-mind through self-power. Therefore, Dōshaku's existential awareness convinced him of his status as a common mortal, and for him Amida disclosed the Way of Nembutsu.

Dōshaku not only viewed the Nembutsu with existential awareness, but he also reflected the general feeling of his time—the feeling that the end of the world is imminent. Especially among Buddhists the times were regarded as the "Mappō," or the "end of Dharma," when the days of the Buddha were long past and the Dharma was on the wane. Dōshaku must have felt this general tenor of the age very keenly and thereby

sought a possible solution. This was the Way of the Nembutsu.

In order to comprehend Dōshaku's Nembutsu correctly, we must grasp his existential despair and his sense of the "Mappō," which are implicit in the works he wrote. In this sense, it would seem that Shinran, having shared almost identical personal and social backgrounds with Dōshaku, could best comprehend Dōshaku and appreciate his concept of Nembutsu.

Shinran quotes Dōshaku's *Anrakushū* in his *Kyō-gyō-shin-shō*, supporting Dōshaku's claim that the utterance of the Name is the supreme and truly splendid Right Act, and that the Right Act is the Nembutsu ("Namu Amida Butsu"), which is the Right Meditation. Shinran quotes four passages from the *Anrakushū* which praise the wonderful merits of the Nembutsu. Dōshaku felt strong sympathy for the so-called sin-ridden common mortals because he shared their condition. He identified with them at the point of his inability to practice anything worth being called good. After he is led to the Way of the Nembutsu, therefore, he sincerely wishes to share with his fellow men his joy in being assured of salvation. So he praises the wonderful merits of the Nembutsu in order to attract ignorant and blind common mortals. He states, for instance, that "the Nembutsu is so powerful that it can cleanse all evils like a drop of lion's milk which changes all other milks of cows, sheep, and donkeys into clear water."²³ In another passage which Shinran quotes Dōshaku in reference to Donran's *San-Amidabutsuge* he writes: "The Nembutsu has such merits... therefore, even if you have to go through fire you should come and listen to the meaning of the Nembutsu."²⁴

Once we understand Dōshaku and his Nembutsu concept, we can see that his praise of the merits of the Nembutsu is an expression of his concern for his fellow beings, who are still trapped in the darkness of the world. By having quoted only passages on the merits of the Nembutsu, however, Shinran might have misrepresented Dōshaku and his Nembutsu. Dōshaku also acknowledged his deep religious experience of being one with Dharma, which revealed itself through his awareness of existential despair and eschatological crisis. At worst, by reading such passages praising the merits of the Nembutsu, some may understand the Nembutsu in the manner of a magic formula. Worse, the very intent of Dōshaku's exposition of the Nembutsu itself might be misun-

derstood.

The concept of common mortals expounded by Dōshaku is further pursued by his disciple Zendō (Shan-tao) in his *Kangyōshō*. Contrary to many of his predecessors, Zendō views the *Kammuryōjūkyō* from the standpoint of a common mortal. In other words, instead of the generally accepted view that the sūtra is intended for men of higher grade, he takes the view that the sūtra is aimed precisely at men like himself who are common mortals immersed in sin and evil, beyond the hope of any salvation. It may be added that he interprets the sūtra not dogmatically but existentially. The Nembutsu as expounded in the sūtra is the Way shown by the Buddha only for men of lower grade. For others who are able and intelligent, the Buddha showed other Ways. Having acknowledged himself as a common mortal with an unsavable nature, Zendō had to interpret the Nembutsu so that it is the true tenet of the sūtra and so that its meaning is specifically directed toward a person like himself.

Zendō admits that there is a Way of Nembutsu intended for men who still value self-power, but the chief aim of the sūtra is to give the Nembutsu of "Other Power" to common mortals. Zendō does not actually use the word "Other Power," but he implies it by such phrases as "Vow Power of the Buddha,"²⁵ (仏願力), "Power of Vow"²⁶ (願力), or "Way of Vow Power"²⁷ (願力之道). He classifies the Nembutsu of self-power as the "Mixed Practice" (雜行), because "one's mind always experiences disruption."²⁸

The Nembutsu of "Other Power," according to Zendō, is the "Right Practice." "The 'Right Practice' is the practice carried out exclusively as shown in the sūtras concerning our birth in the Pure Land."²⁹ Therefore, it is called the Right Practice. According to Zendō, however, are two kinds of the Right Practice. One is to worship the Buddha, to recite sūtras, and perform other practices, called "Assisting Actions." The other is pronounce to single-heartedly and exclusively the Name of Amida Buddha, and, without regard to place, manner, or time, hold it without any break of time. This is called the "Right Established Action."

When Shinran claims that the Nembutsu is the Right Act, he refers to Zendō's "Right Established Action." In other words, as far as Shinran is concerned, what is meant by the Nembutsu is the Nembutsu

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of Other Power and nothing else. Even the nembutsu of contemplation or recitation of sūtras are considered nembutsu of "jiriki" or "self-power," and thus are rejected by him. The true Nembutsu is the Nembutsu of Amida Buddha, and no self-power is involved. Even one's pronouncing the Buddha's Name, or paying homage to Him, or thinking of Him are not acts originating in oneself. In this aspect we see the difference between Zendō's Nembutsu and Shinran's, but this difference is not really based on fundamental doctrinal discrepancies. Indeed, it could be said that Shinran presents the true meaning of the Nembutsu of Zendō more clearly.

Another point we should note regarding Nembutsu of Zendō is that Zendō emphasizes the Nembutsu as the "Shōmyō Nembutsu," meaning "the Nembutsu by reciting the Name of Amida Buddha." This may be because of the influence of Dōshaku, who also emphasized the importance of the Shōmyō Nembutsu. In the case of Zendō, however, the Nembutsu is emphasized as a practice that even common people can easily perform.

Because he is a common mortal himself, Zendō strongly feels the need to teach other common mortals this wonderful and easy practice of the Nembutsu. However, by emphasizing the practicality and practicability of the Nembutsu for the sake of sin-ridden common mortals, Zendō somewhat obscured the true meaning of the Nembutsu.

In the Nembutsu of Genshin our attention is focused on his strong emphasis on the concept of the "Mappō" along with his idea of common mortals. Genshin, in his *Ōjoyōshū*, concentrates on the minute descriptions of various hells. This is obviously due to his profound sense of crisis, i.e., an awareness of the "Mappō," the "end of Dharma." He states simply that in the defiled age of the "Mappō," a person like himself, who is poorly gifted in his intellect, has no choice but to follow the Single Way of Nembutsu. On the one hand, Genshin gives praise and affirms his faith in the Nembutsu, saying that whoever says the Nembutsu is surely taken in and not abandoned. On the other, he still laments, saying, "though I too live in His light, illusion hinders sight and I cannot see Him. Yet untired is He in His great compassion, shedding ever light upon me."³⁹ From his own experience Genshin reveals the agony and suffering of a man who is eternally caught between his

self-trust and self-despair. In contrast to Genshin, who still abides in the land of self-power, Shenran is more to the point. Shinran is quoted in the *Tannishō* as having said:

Even when I say the Nembutsu, I rarely get to feel rapture and joy; nor do I feel any desire to be born in the Pure Land in haste. 'Why is this so?' I asked. 'I, Shinran, have also had the same question,' answered Shinran Shonin... 'If we reflect upon the whole matter again and again, we should realize that our Birth in the Pure Land is more assured, precisely because we cannot feel joyous over the very thing that we ought to feel joyous enough to dance in heaven and on earth. Don't you see that what keeps our minds from rejoicing when they ought to rejoice is the working of our self-desires. However, the Buddha had already known this so that He called us 'common mortals filled with evil desires.' Therefore, it is none but persons like us that the Buddha established the Compassionate Vow of the Other Power. As I come to know this, I feel it all the more trustworthy³¹

As we can conclude from the above quotation, the Nembutsu for Shinran is no longer his own doing but Amida's Act. He comes to hear and feel the Nembutsu within his very agony and frustration. The subject of the Nembutsu is reversed from him to Amida Buddha, and he is no longer separated from but taken into the Amida's Act. In the case of Genshin, however, the Nembutsu is still undertood as the only practice that we (common mortals of evil desires) should perform. Therefore, Genshin in his *Ōjōyōshū*, proclaims that "the Nembutsu is now urged, not to shut out all other various good practices, but because the practice is not hard for any person,...., wherever, however, or whenever, or under whatever circumstances."³² He also urges people to recite the Nembutsu by praising the six merits³³ of the Buddha. According to Genshin, the Buddha, being such a meritorious Being, must become the object of our Nembutsu. Shinran, however, reverses the meaning of this statement and rewrites it to mean that the Nembutsu is meritorious because it originates in Amida Buddha. This does not distort what Genshin said, but rather it is Shinran's existential interpretation of what Genshin himself implied. In other words, by reading

what Genshin existentially implied, Shinran interpreted the true and hidden meaning of Genshin's Nembutsu more clearly.

As I have already pointed out in the works of Dōshaku and Zenshō, it was their strong conviction of "common mortals immersed deeply in evil and sinful desires" that made them turn towards the Nembutsu as their only alternative for being saved. Furthermore, this led them to direct their energies to the propagation of the Nembutsu along so-called sin-ridden common mortals. In other words, they found not only the way of their own salvation in the Nembutsu but also the way of salvation for all common mortals. Thus, in the Nembutsu they found the way to make the Teachings of the Buddha relevant not only for a handful of elite and scholars but for all the people of their times. The Nembutsu was no longer just the way of individual salvation; instead it restored the true spirit of the Buddha. Having been brought up in the atmosphere of Mt. Hiei Monastery, Genshin felt strongly the need to revitalize Buddhism. He found that the Nembutsu provided the way to reach common mortals who were deeply immersed in evil desires and kept from the Light of Dharma, so long under the depressive aristocratic system. It was quite natural for him (and understandable to us) that he strongly urged people to accept the Nembutsu by praising the wonderful merits of the Buddha and by scaring people with minute descriptions of the terrors of various hells:

There is no peace in this three world. It is the most horrifying place. If I am to describe the reality of this world, there are altogether seven aspects. They are the aspect of hell, animal, devil, man, heaven, and them all combined.

There are eight kinds of the hell, namely Tokatsu hell,³⁴ Kokujyo hell,³⁵ Shugo hell,³⁶ Kyokan hell,³⁷ Dai-kyokan hell,³⁸ Shonetsu hell,³⁹ Daishonetsu hell,⁴⁰ and Muken hell.⁴¹ Tokatsu hell is located ten thousand yojana⁴² below this Sahā world and it is ten thousand square yojanas. Those who live in this hell are always hating each other. If they meet each other, like hunters coming to weed deer, they tear each others with iron-nails until all blood and flesh of their bodies are splashed around and there remains nothing but their bones...⁴³

In fact, his description of hells in the *Ōjōyōshū* is so realistic and hair-raising that it is said to have shocked many of his contemporaries. This, too, cannot be criticized as simply an over-active imagination, but is more properly understood in terms of the chaos and turmoil of his times.

Consequently, both the corrupt conditions of monastic and secular life, and his own existential despair must have driven Genshin to embrace the life of the Nembutsu and to propagate its message of liberation with urgent missionary zeal. He expresses this sense of urgency in the *Ōjōyōshū* "A sin-ridden person has no other means left than to pronounce His Name, thereby to be born in the country of Highest Happiness."⁴⁴ "...Those of us who live in a defiled age, this last of the ages, ordained or not ordained, born of a noble family or a humble family, without exception, must take refuge in the Way of the Nembutsu."⁴⁵

For Genshin, the Nembutsu is not something he alone can enjoy. It must be shared and sung by his fellow "common mortals." It was no longer the Nembutsu of saintly priests residing in temples or monasteries, but the Nembutsu of the masses sung at their homes and places of work. It is here we find the leading elements and basic significance of the Nembutsu of Genshin.

It is true that in spite of Genshin's emphasis on the Nembutsu for the masses and his own conviction of being a common mortal, he remained aloof from the common people. It is also true that in spite of placing an emphasis on the Nembutsu for the masses, he stressed the importance of continuous recitation of the Nembutsu ("Hyakumanben Nembutsu" or "Nembutsu of one million times" in seven das). It is here that he somewhat obscured the true meaning of the Nembutsu.

There is no question that Shinran is deeply indebted to Genkū (Hōnen), since he is the teacher through whom Shinran was first introduced to the Nembutsu. As we compare the Nembutsu of Hōnen and Shinran, however, we discover some differences between them.

As in the case of Genshin, Hōnen bases the Nembutsu on one's awareness of his sinful nature as a common mortal and on faith in the Amida's Vows. However, Hōnen stressed the concept of "common mortals" more strongly than anyone previously. Contrary to his reputation as a genius and a saintly man, it is known that he called himself "a foolish man of constant grumble." Furthermore, he found his place among the

common mortals in the city instead of high in the Mt. Hiei Monastery. Because he understood the Nembutsu as the only way a common mortal immersed in evil desires could be saved, he discarded all other practices. He believed it, preached it, and lived up to it; yet he still maintained some aloofness from the so-called sin-ridden common mortals of his era. Perhaps he could not help himself. After all, he was a member of the aristocratic society and was respected and revered by many of his aristocratic patrons.

This is where I find a difference in the interpretation of the Nembutsu between Hōnen and Shinran. The difference lies in the way each man led his life in relation to the Nembutsu. This is demonstrated in an incident when Hōnen took a stand with Shinran and a few other against the majority of disciples. Hōnen and Shinran insisted that the Nembutsu of faith is more important than that of practice, but Hōnen's disciples, in spite of his emphasis on faith, considered practice higher than faith. Hōnen firmly committed himself to the belief in the Nembutsu of faith in his *Senjakushū* :

Now, why this collection (*Anrakushū*) shows the two paths, i.e., the Path of Sages and the Path that leads to the Pure Land, lies in the hope that we may abandon the Path of Sages and take to the Path that leads to the Pure Land. Bearing on this, there are two reasons. First, it is now long since the time of Śākyamuni Buddha; second, the thought is deep and the understanding but little...⁴⁶

Like his predecessors, Hōnen understood the word "Mappō" rather literally to mean a dimension or expanse of time. In other words, Hōnen understood the Mappō to be the cause of man's spiritual decay, yet at the same time he maintained an attitude of aloofness from the world of "Mappō." On the other hand, Shinran interprets "Mappō" existentially. The "Mappō" is not merely a word to explain the condition of a world that is corrupted and deteriorated but is the world where he lives; and, most importantly, there is no way to escape from it. In the *Wasan*, Shinran comments on the condition of Buddhism of his day: "The sorrow of the corrupted world of 'Mappō' is that the word 'priest' stands for palanquin bearers of those high priests of Nara and Hiei, and thus came to mean low statuses of people."⁴⁷ Although Shinran directed his criti-

cism towards the established schools of Buddhism in Nara and Hiei, he was fully aware of the fact that he was a member of these establishments. As far as Shinran was concerned, the "Mappō" is the reality of the world and of his time and without exception, whether one is a priest or a layman. There is no way to escape from it. This conviction of the "Mappō" later led him to abandon his priesthood and to declare that he was neither priest nor layman.

Regarding the Nembutsu as the "Shōmyō" or the oral recitation of the Name, Hōnen is in accordance with Zendō. In answer to the question why the pronouncing of Amida's Name alone becomes the Right Established Action, he replies: "Because it accords with the Vow of Amida Buddha. The significance is that the pronouncing of the Nembutsu is the practice that is vowed by Amida Buddha in His Vow. Therefore, anybody who practices this rides on the Vow. Thus he will unfailingly be born in the Pure Land."⁴⁸

Thus he insists on the practice of the Nembutsu and the faith that accompanies the Nembutsu over against all other practices of self-power. However, what is not clear is whether faith or the practice of the Nembutsu which accompanies faith is more important. As I have pointed out already, this problem caused considerable confusion among his followers even during his lifetime.

As an answer to a question concerning difference between "thoughts" and "voice," Hōnen responds:

The thought and the voice are one. Why? The *Kammuryōjukyō*, where it speaks of the lowest form of life of the lowest grade, says: 'Thus... he keeps on pronouncing the Name uninterruptedly. He, with the thought accompanied for ten times, says 'Namu-Amida-Batsu.' Because of the pronouncing of the Buddha's Name, he by every repetition, expiates the sins which bind him to birth and death for eight thousand million kalpas.' From this we may infer that the 'thought' is at once the 'voice' and 'voice' at once the 'thought.' The meaning is clear. Further the *Dajugatsuzōkyō* says: 'great nen' (thought) sees a great Buddha and a 'small nen' a petty Buddha. The Venerable Huaikan says: 'The word 'great nen' means to pronounce the Nembutsu loudly, while the word 'small nen' means to

pronounce the Nembutsu in a small voice,' from this we may know that 'thought' means to 'pronounce.'⁴⁹

Though he says that "thought" and "to pronounce" are one, he, by having quoted the *Daijugatsuyōkyō*,⁵⁰ implies that there is Greater merit for more frequent and louder Nembutsu. It is no wonder that more emphasis came to be placed on the numbers of Nembutsus than the Nembutsu itself. This is where we come to see a profound difference between the Nembutsu of Hōnen and that of Shinran.

As far as Shinran is concerned, the Nembutsu does not originate in ourselves but means our doing the Act of Amida Buddha Himself. Therefore, it does not make any difference how many times we pronounce the Nembutsu. If the Nembutsu is our doing, it is simply the "Jiriki (self-power) Nembutsu" which Shinran emphatically rejected. Shinran calls self-power "hakarai" which means "to contrive" or "to calculate," and he constantly disavows this "hakarai" as a hindrance to the true Nembutsu.

What is meant by the 'jiriki' is that people, each according to their karmic condition, think of a Buddha other than Amida Buddha, recite His Name, and practice good deeds relying on their judgments, that they plan out their own ideas as regards how properly and felicitously to adjust their activities of the body, mouth, and mind for rebirth in the Pure Land. By 'tariki' is meant wholeheartedly to accept and believe the Original Vow of Amida whereby He assures those who pronounce His Name to be born in the Pure Land. As this is the Vow made by Amida, it has a sense which cannot be described by any common measure of judgment—a sense which is beyond sense, as taught by my holy master.⁵¹

As I pointed out in the previous chapter, Shinran later came to discourage even the word "Shōmyō" or "to pronounce the Name," because it implied some residue of self-power, and instead he used the word "hearing." The Name is Namu Amida Butsu," and by hearing this, according to Shinran, man is able to obtain faith and rebirth. The Name, faith, and rebirth—all originate in Amida Buddha and are transferred (pariṇāmana) to man. This is the way Shinran understands the Nembutsu.

As we have studied each of the Seven Masters of Shin Buddhism, we have come to see a continuity of Nembutsu-thought which originated in the very teachings of the Buddha. This continuity of the thought is not perfectly smooth but in spite of ups and downs it continually builds up a momentum concluding with Shinran. Here and there, we have run into obscurities and ambiguities in the meaning of the Nembutsu caused by emphasis being placed on different aspects of the Nembutsu. I have pointed out such obscurities and ambiguities and criticized them from the point of view of Shinran's Nembutsu. From the perspective of the historical continuity of Nembutsu-thought, however, I now realize that all of the Seven Masters had done their best to extract the true meaning of the Buddha's teachings through their understanding of the Nembutsu within their historical and social context. In fact, without them and their courageous attempts to extract and preserve the true spirit of Buddhism, Shinran would not have been able to make his contribution to the Nembutsu. Shinran's Nembutsu is, after all, the culmination of Nembutsu-thought that had been built up by his spiritual antecedents. Furthermore, Shinran's Nembutsu is none other than the expression of Dharma-truth, transcendent yet immanently dynamic, which was revealed to him through the cumulative tradition of the Nembutsu of the Seven Masters.

(C) SHINRAN'S POSITION CONCERNING THE MEANING OF THE NEMBUTSU

Although Mahāyāna Buddhism had already started around the first century B.C., it did not become a significant historical movement until Nāgārjuna's influence. As Reverend Inagi points out, Nāgārjuna was almost like a second Śākyamuni who had clarified the true meaning of the Buddha's teaching.⁵² In Theravāda Buddhism, the Buddha's Teaching and the Dharma (which is the content of the Buddha's Enlightenment and is none other than the elucidation and realization of the Dharma) had been schematized to such an extent that the true meaning and spirit of the Buddha's teaching had been distorted and lost. It was, therefore, Nāgārjuna's intent to restore and re-establish the true meaning of the Buddha's teaching by deschematizing the Theravāda's view. We must bear this in mind as we examine Nāgārjuna's Nembutsu-thought.

It may be said that Shinran approached and understood Nāgārjuna

precisely from Nāgārjuna's own point of view. Shinran was mostly concerned, not with the literal understanding of Nāgārjuna's ideas, but with the need to find the true meaning hidden between the lines. In order to understand the transcendental truth of the Dharma, which is dynamic and immanent, his approach had to be that of an existentialist. Shinran interpreted Nāgārjuna and others, and, in fact, Buddhism itself from an existential point of view. Buddhism and its history was, for him, the expression of the Dharma, dynamic and immanent, revealing itself through the human desire to transcend the world. Together with a deep sense of existential despair and eschatological crisis, these were the attitudes and approaches of Shinran toward Nāgārjuna and others. This led him to the discovery of the Nembutsu as a dynamic expression of the Dharma in the terms of the Forty-eight Vows of Bodhisattva Dharmākara.

It is true that Shinran has been criticized for his rather free interpretation of the scriptures. In fact, he has been charged with distortion by reading new meaning into them. From his own point of view, however, this was quite justifiable. He was not interested in the literal interpretation of the theories of those who preceded him; rather, he sought to extract the "kerygma" from their teachings.

In the Theravāda Buddhism, however, the original teaching of the Buddha was highly conceptualized. As the result, it came to assume dualistic position of the subject-object. The very concept of the Pratītya samut-pāda and of the non-ego was grasped rather in dualistic sense. The idea of non-ego, too was understood from the analytical view of the five skandhas,⁵³ and the Pratītya samut-pāda was thought as the concept of the lineal time which runs through the three worlds.⁵⁴

It was this dualistic position of Theravāda Buddhism that Nāgārjuna rejected as being contradictory to the true understanding of the Buddha's teaching. He introduced the concept of "Śūnyatā," which means (negatively) "anitya" or "anātman," "impermanence" of "non-self." It denies that we can hold on to anything as permanent entities. Śūnyatā also means (affirmatively) the Pratītya samut-pāda, Bodhi, truth, ultimate reality, etc.

The affirmative and the negative expressions are two different

expressions of the ultimate truth of Dharma—the Dharma which is transcendent and immanent. It is in the Dharma that absolute negation becomes the positive affirmation. It is not to seek something absolute outside reality, but rather it is to affirm within the world of reality and the realm of relativity the Absolute Dharma, which transcends reality and relativity.

Life, as the Buddha pointed out in His Four Noble Truths, is “dukkha”—the basic presupposition of His teaching. It is quite natural for man to wish to overcome “dukkha.” Some superstitious and magical religions seek possible solution of “dukkha” without. Buddhism, contrary to such religions, does not encourage man to seek his liberation without, but strives to teach man how to overcome “dukkha” within the world of “dukkha:”

Buddhism teaches man how to swim in the sea of ‘dukkha.’ In order for man to swim, there must be water in which he can swim. Satori, therefore, means to know how to swim. Satori, this know-how, cannot be sought outside the world of ‘dukkha.’⁵⁵

Satori means the state of freedom where man can swim freely in the world of “dukkha” without fear of being drowned by “dukkha.” To realize Dharma, transcendent and immanent Truth, means precisely to become a person who can swim freely in this world. In order to be able to swim, however, man needs practice. Such practice must be done in the water, and is called “caryā” in Buddhism. Since the “dukkha” is the life and reality we live in, Nirvāṇa or Enlightenment cannot be sought outside—it is only possible here in the world of reality.

The Dharma, as the transcendent-immanent Truth, cannot be separated from the reality and relativity of this world, nor can it be equated with relativity. There is no way to reach the world of the Absolute from the world of relativity, because what separates the Absolute and the relative is this very “I” and “ego-consciousness.” Theoretically, however, it is possible to transcend the world of relativity by the vigorous ascetic “caryā” of self-denial and to attain the realization of the Dharma. It is true, as the Theravādians and some Mahāyānists claim, that Śākyamuni did attain the Nirvāṇa through his self-practice. No Buddhists deny this fact. It is, however, agreed upon by all Buddhists that this self-practice is extremely difficult and arduous. Difficult,

but not impossible, is the Way to Nirvāṇa by overcoming the ego and the self-attachment which cause this eternal gap between the Absolute and the relative, the Happiness and the suffering, the Nirvāṇa and the Saṃsāra. So, Buddhists in the past have expounded the possibility of finding the best "caryā" which would suit their needs and dispositions.

Even among the Seven Masters of the Shin school, this tendency was persistent, or at least their various expositions have been understood as attempts to clarify the best means of "caryā" to attain Enlightenment. Their concepts of the Nembutsu were, in fact, taken as one of such "caryās." We cannot say that they were all misunderstood by others or that their interpretations of the Nembutsu were distorted purposely by people who entertained themselves with notions of self-repect and self-trust. Rather they lacked clarity concerning the meaning of the Nembutsu (which Shinran understood as the Mahā-caryā of Amida) for people who were not fully conscious of their existential despair and the sense of eschatological crisis. Again, we cannot blame them for this, for they too were historical and sociological beings, i.e., karma bound and abided by the thought and expectation of the time. As Rudolf Bultmann says:

Man exists in a permanent tension between the past and the future. At every moment he is confronted with an alternative. Either he must immerse himself in the concrete world of nature and thus inevitably lose his individuality, or, he must abandon all security and commit himself unreservedly to the future and thus alone achieve his authentic Being.⁵⁶

It takes a man who is quite aware of such an existential dilemma to understand the true meaning of the thought which is behind his expositions of the thought. Shinran was such a man; he could detect what was behind the words and articulate it in his Nembutsu of Other Power. I shall now proceed with each of the Seven Masters and compare and contrast their Nembutsu with that of Shinran. As Professor Nishida points out:

In this way, we hit the self-contradiction in the depth of our self, as existential failure and salvation. But this is not realized by ourselves, but the call of the Absolute! Self-denial is not possible through our own self.⁵⁷

Theoretically, it is possible to pierce the wall of the world of relativity and penetrate the realm of the Absolute by self-denial, for the relativity is the very reflection of our self and the self-attachment. The self-denial is not only difficult and risky, but also it is sometimes fatal because the self is the very foundation of one's existence, however relative it may be. Furthermore, in the midst of self-denial there remains the self who denies. This self can neither be denied nor reduced to nothing. No matter how vigorously and courageously one tries to deny this self, the self who denies is beyond denial. Therefore, "the self-denial is not possible through our own Self."⁵⁸ Thus, the gate from the relative to the Absolute is closed for us, but from the view of the Absolute, the relative world is contained within the Absolute. This is because the Absolute does not exist without the relative. In other words, from the view of the Absolute, the Absolute encompasses the relative; and from the view of the relative, the relative is grasped within the Absolute. This is what the Dharma, being transcendent and immanent, implies. Therefore, within the Dharma—Nirvāṇa and Saṃsāra, Enlightenment and "dukkha," infinitude and finitude—Buddha and beings are conceived inseparable though different. In a sense it is a dualistic relationship, but only from the relative point of view; any break through to the Absolute from the relative is impossible.

It is, in this sense, that Shinran repeatedly made it clear that as long as the Nembutsu is the way of self-effort or self-power, it is to deepen one's agony and frustration and to separate him from the Absolute.

The Nembutsu as practiced by the 'jiriki' followers puts the Buddha away from themselves far in the West, and thinking that they are worthless beings, they would now and then recollect the Original Vow of the Buddha and pronounce His Name. This being so, the most intimate relationship between the Buddha and all beings fails to establish itself here.⁵⁹

Therefore, the Nembutsu for Shinran had to be Mahā-caryā of Amida, the "pariṇāmana" from Amida. Shinran obviously became convinced that as long as he was subject to the world of relativity there was no way to save himself from it and that the only way to be saved was to throw himself into the power of Amida, which manifests Himself

in his existential despair. He came to this conviction, not through philosophical or metaphysical speculation, but by having lived up to the ascetic practice of self-denial in the monastery of Mt. Hiei. In other words, by having lived up to his monastic life he came to inevitable despair, "existential despair." But it was precisely within his despair that he heard. It may sound mystical, but Shinran himself acknowledged this in saying that the Nembutsu is "monmyō," "hear the Name," the Nembutsu, the voiceless voice of Amida's urging. The Nembutsu literally means "to think of the Buddha" and was historically understood as meditation, a way of self-practice, along with other forms of practice. In such cases, it was this "I" as subject, "thinking of" the Buddha or "meditating on" the Buddha. Thus, the Nembutsu was understood as the way of practice in which "I" pursues the end. In other words, it was understood as the "caryā" or practice.

According to Mr. Sakurabe,⁸⁸ there seems to be some disagreement among Buddhologists regarding the etymology of the word "gyō" (行), which is usually translated as "practice." There are many words which imply the meaning of "gyō" (行) in Pali scriptures. These are "cariyā," "patipāda," "magga" "bhāvanā," "tapas," "yoga" and "vata." For the Mahāyānist, the word "caryā" ("cariyā," in Pali), is certainly a familiar one; it is used as "bodhisattva-caryā," or "samāntabhadra-caryā," etc. The word "patipāda" is almost synonymous with "magga," and is used as "sammāpatipadā" or "middle way." "Bhāvanā" is often seen with "citta" or "mind," meaning mental or spiritual practice. "Tapas" is used for two types of practice. In the case of "yay," "attanam tapeti," it means undesirable practice. As "tapo amaram" it praises the virtue of ascetic practice. The word "vata" is known as "śīla vata."

Thus, the word "gyō" (行) designates many different forms of practice, and this makes it difficult to determine which original Sanskrit is more appropriate for which form of practice. Since the word "gyō" (行) practice, means practice in general, it seems permissible to use the word "caryā" for it. At any rate, whatever form of "caryā" one performs, it is historically understood as the self-practice which presupposes that this "I" practices the teaching or the "magga" expounded by the Buddha. Even practice is the practice of self-denial; it affirms "I" or "you" as the one who practices. The Nembutsu, too, as a form practice, was understood in the sense of self-practice. It is true even among the

Seven Masters that the Nembutsu was generally presented along with other types of practice. Of course, the Nembutsu occupies the highest position among all the Seven Masters, and some of them emphasize that the Nembutsu is incomparable to other practices because it is based on the Other Power of Amida. Yet to me they seem to lack convincing power in the manner in which they stress the incompatibility of the Nembutsu with other practices. Why? It is perhaps because of my close feeling toward Shinran. If it is so, then I too am a victim of schematization in holding Shinran so high in esteem, thereby failing to understand the very meaning of the Nembutsu-thought of Shinran.

Shinran's understanding of the meaning of the Nembutsu is contrary to the historically accepted view of the Nembutsu. Indeed, the meaning of the Nembutsu is completely reversed. For Shinran, the Nembutsu is no longer the "caryā" or practice of people. It is the Mahā-caryā of Amida. We no longer "thing of" or "meditate on" the Buddha; instead, it is we who are "thought of" or "meditated on" by Amida. This "I" as the subject who practices the Nembutsu is replaced by Amida Himself, and we are to "hear" the Nembutsu of Amida. Shinran calls the Nembutsu "monmyō," meaning to hear the Name of Amida, as He expresses His compassion in the Forty-eight Vows through our existential despair. As we hear the Name—the Nembutsu—and we are convinced by His Original Vows, have established our faith, and have been assured of salvation. This is the way in which the Dharma, which is transcendent, becomes immanent to us; we transcend the world of relativity into the realm of the Absolute. In other words, by the Nembutsu, the very manifestation of the transcendence, the self of the act of self-denial is negated. The negation is now negated and becomes positive affirmation, the freedom of Nirvāṇa attained. This "Copernican revolution" is only possible in one's existential awareness of the contradiction of human nature and the consequent despair wherein one really comes to hear the Name of Amida as compassion and assurance of salvation. Shinran, therefore, in his desperate search for the way, came to hear the Name of Amida expressed in the expositions of the Seven Masters.

If the Original Vow of Amida is true, then how could Śākyamuni's sermons be false? If the Teaching of Śākyamuni Buddha is true, then Zendo's comments cannot be

untrue. If Zendō's comments are true, how could Hōnen's sayings be false? If Hōnen's sayings are true, what I, Shinran say cannot possibly be false, either. After all, such is the faith of this foolish Shinran. Beyond this, it is entirely up to you whether you take up the Nembutsu and put faith in it or cast it off.⁶¹

Despite the way he expresses his feeling, we come to detect his true intention, which is hidden behind his passive manner of self-expression. In other words, through such a passive manner, he conveys the true meaning of the Nembutsu, which Amida out of His compassion "thinks of" us, not vice versa. In this case, the subject of "Nembutsu," literally "to think of the Buddha," is no longer "I" or "we," but the object of the Nembutsu which now takes the place of the subject. It is the Buddha who "thinks of" "I" or "us,"; (念仏) "nen-butsu" means literally, "to think of Buddha." It is customary among Chinese to leave out the subject when the subject is more or less understood. The subject can be replaced by the object, however, by simply inserting the sign "✓" or numerical numbers of "一" and "二."⁶² In other words, in such cases, a sentence will be read, not from the usual manner of "up" to "down," but from "down" to "up." When he reads Chinese scriptures, Shinran does this often in order to shift the subject from man to the Buddha or from the relative to the Absolute.⁶³

It is, of course, not an intentional distortion of the meaning, but simply his way of reading new meaning in the lines. This is what Bultmann⁶⁴ calls "existential interpretation," or the "hermeneutical approach." For example, in the case of the Nembutsu, Shinran shifts the center from man to the Buddha in saying that it is the Buddha who is thinking of us and reaching out to us. This is to reflect Shinran's deep religious conviction that as long as man is a relative being, it is simply impossible for him to reach the Absolute—only the Absolute can reveal itself to him. For example, D. T. Suzuki points this out in *The Eastern Buddhist*:

The one most significant remark which is to be made here is that Shinran has his characteristic way of the Chinese passage containing the characters..., 'to turn towards... in sincerity of thought.' 'To turn toward whom?' is the question here. Ordinarily it is for all beings to

turn towards Amida and direct all their stock of merit towards their rebirth in His country, and no doubt, from the literary point of view too, this is the correct reading. But Shinran reverses the customary way of reading and makes Amida turn all His accumulated merit toward opening the passage for all beings to His Pure Land.⁶⁵

Therefore, when we compare and contrast the Nembutsu of the Seven Masters with that of Shinran, we come to notice some differences in interpretation and emphasis. As I have already pointed out, however, the differences are due to Shinran's existential interpretation of the scriptures, an interpretation which reflects his religious conviction that Amida expresses Himself through the words of his Masters. Such differences we find are by no means due to his intentional distortion of the meaning of the Nembutsu of his Masters, nor are they due to his skillful manipulation of the materials so as to justify his Nembutsu at the expense of others. Rather, it is because of his humble and sincere attitude toward his Masters that Shinran tried to discover in them the true meaning of the Nembutsu.

(D) WHAT IS NEW IN SHINRAN

Shinran understands that the Absolute Power of the Dharma, which has been continuous yet immanent throughout the teachings of the Seven Masters, enables him to listen to the voice of Amida and to recite the Name of Amida, the Nembutsu. The moment of hearing the Name of Amida (monmyō) constitutes the moment of faith and simultaneously the attainment of Birth into the Pure Land. Shinran calls this doctrine "Nembutsu ōjō," literally meaning "to go and be born by thinking of the Buddha;" or "Sokutoku ōjō," meaning "at once attain Rebirth." This means that when one thinks of the Buddha, i.e., Amida with single-heartedness, one is assured of Rebirth into the Pure Land.

In practice, "thinking of Amida," the "Monmyō-Nembutsu," is equivalent to "pronouncing the Name," "Shōmyō-Nembutsu." According to Shinran, the Nembutsu comes from absolute faith in Amida and has the effect of once for all time. That moment is equivalent to Birth into the Pure Land. The outcome of this is the assurance of "ōjō," Rebirth into the Pure Land, in our present existence. This contrasts sharply with the traditional understanding that "ōjō" is attained only after death.

Having emphasized the Nembutsu as an expression of Amida's initiating enlightening power, Shinran considers that one authentic experience of the Nembutsu fulfills perfectly. This identification of "ōjō" (Rebirth in Pure Land) and enlightenment represents a unique understanding of Buddhist teaching on Shinran's part. Being assured of Rebirth does not imply something static. Once Rebirth is assured, then the rest of one's earthly life contains constant reminders to one of the assurance of Rebirth into the Pure Land. Therefore, one lives a dynamic life of faith, constantly reminded of assured Rebirth and always grateful for assurance of Rebirth into the Pure Land. D.T. Suzuki states as follows:

...Being assured of rebirth means the foretasting of enlightenment. It is for Buddhas alone, the most highly perfected beings, to enjoy Supreme Enlightenment, while what is granted to us, ordinary mortals, is to experience something of enlightenment and thereby to orient ourselves—this orientation is the foretasting and assurance of rebirth.⁶⁶

For Shinran, however, assurance of Rebirth exceeds the "foretasting" of enlightenment. Shinran, understanding "ōjō" (Rebirth) in an existential and dynamic sense, transvalued his present life, such as his biological needs (bonnō) which had hindered him from attainment of enlightenment, into very reminders of the Rebirth which faith had assured him by making it a present realization. "Bonnō" no longer deters enlightenment by faith but become symbols which reassure a person of his "being assured of his ōjō." Kakunyo states:

Shinran rejoiced, (in relying absolutely upon the Absolute Power of the saving Vow and becoming free from his self-power), completely forgot himself in faith transferred by Amida with His true mind, and instantly took refuge in the Vow-sea, i.e., the Name in which all necessary practices for our Rebirth are perfected. He recited, constantly harboring his inner faith, the Name for gratitude with a vital force, and thus he was benefited to his life's end by the Light that transcends time and space.⁶⁷

Shinran ascribes this experienced Reality to the Absolute Power of Amida continuously expounded in the teachings of his Masters and dynamically manifested in his own awareness of "being a man of un-

quenchable 'bonnō' and deep karma," of being even now unquestionably assured of his Rebirth into the Pure Land.

Derived from his own religious experience, Shinran's Nembutsu-ōjō teaching is unique and seems in some sense to contradict previous developments in Buddhist teaching and thought. From the point of view of the Absolute Power of Dharma (transcendent and immanent, continuous and dynamic in space and time), however, Shinran's understanding of the Nembutsu-ōjō does not revoke or contradict previous developments in Buddhist teachings and thought. Shinran's Nembutsu-ōjō actually represents a continuity, rather than a discontinuity in the tradition of Buddhist thought.

Because Shinran understood the Nembutsu as the "Monmyō-Nembutsu" ("hearing of the Name") rather than the "Shōmyō-Nembuteu" ("recitation of the Name"), for him the Nembutsu manifests the Absolute Power of Amida's Vow even as it also manifests one's faith as he comes to perceive this Absolute Power. Therefore, the Nembutsu is the moment of being assured of one's salvation and Shinran's Nembutsu-ōjō creates no abrupt rupture in the Buddhist way of salvation. Furthermore, whereas the Nembutsu is the Absolute Power of Amida revealed in man's awareness of his shameful nature and revealed as the assurance of a person's salvation in spite of his shameful nature, it is also the expression of one's worthiness and his extreme gratitude and joy. Whatever actions follow after the moment of one's faith arise from one's gratitude and desire to acknowledge a debt which can never be repaid but only enjoyed. This is what Shinran called the "Hōon-kansha-no-Nembutsu," "the Nembutsu of gratitude and repayment."

Shinran understood the Nembutsu as the expression of the Absolute Other Power of Amida alone and, at most, the expression of one's gratitude for the assurance of Rebirth. Everything in matters of faith and salvation is credited to the Absolute Power of Amida, leaving no room for one's self-effort, or self-discipline. Shinran is quoted in the *Tannishō* as having said that "the Nembutsu is non-practice and non-good for those who practice it." Shinran did not describe the Nembutsu as a way of moral practice. Instead, he emphasized the Nembutsu as the expression of one's gratitude to the Absolute Power of Amida. This suggests, on first hearing, almost an antinomian view. As we examine Shinran's Nembutsu-thought carefully, however, we come to rea-

lize his deep sense of moral frustration and inexpressible feeling of gratitude to Amida, Who made him realize his own identity and assured him of Rebirth in spite of his unworthiness and inabilities. Besides, as Shinran states in the *Tannishō*:

I just don't know what is good and what is evil. The reason thereof is that if I could know good to the extent the Tathāgata thinks in His own mind as good, I may well have come to know what is good. If I could know evil to the extent the Tathāgata thinks in His mind as evil, I may well have come to know what is evil. All are but things vain and idle and with nothing true and genuine in so far as matters go in this world of sin-ridden common mortals and in this house of fire, this world of transiency and change, only the Nembutsu is true and genuine!⁶⁸

As we examine the problem of good and evil, we hardly find what is good in this life. Furthermore, we come to know that what constitutes so-called evil is our own very ego-centric mind.

Having realized what is the cause of evil, Shinran rejects all self-effort emphatically and stresses the importance of the Nembutsu of gratitude as the only genuinely good. What greater good can man do than live his life by gratitude? For Shinran this was not a question for deliberation and evaluated answers. Shinran's experience disclosed to him that this is reality: Having received the Nembutsu by the gracious generosity of Amida, a person can only respond with attitudes and deeds of gratitude. Whether such a response measures out to be "good" by some other standard is irrelevant: it is good because it is the reality given to us by Amida.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

During the course of my research in which I have analyzed and compared the Nembutsu experience in Shinran's teaching and in that of the Seven Masters, I have encountered striking resemblances in the concept of faith of Shinran and that of prominent Protestant thinkers such as Martin Luther, John Calvin, John Wesley, and Karl Barth.

This apparent resemblance of Shinran's faith with that of Christian theologians has led some people to draw the hasty and inaccurate conclusion that Shin Buddhism deviates from original Buddhism or may result from Christian influence on Buddhism in China.¹ One of my own major reasons for taking up the present subject in my research was to determine with complete objectivity and from the perspective of the historical development of Buddhist thought, what were the seminal ingredients in Shinran's teaching on faith and their consequences.

Although I do not claim my research to be exhaustive, I have accomplished at least a main objective of my research: I have ascertained that Shinran's Nembutsu was not an idiosyncrasy of Shinran, but, faith in the Absolute Power of Amida's Vow, which expressed the Dharma, dynamic and immanent, revealing itself through the historical development of Buddhist thought and through the individual human desires to rise above and transcend the world. I reached this conclusion through my research into each one of the Seven Masters and their influence upon Shinran. Shinran stands at the culminating point of the Mahāyāna's revitalizing movement to recover and expound true understanding of the Buddha's teaching. This understanding of the dynamic experience of Reality had been obscured by the highly conceptualized and schematized position of Theravāda Buddhism, which assumed a dualistic understanding of the Buddha's teachings.

By faith in the Absolute Power of Amida's Vows, Shinran depicts Amida not as the "Creator and Lord of Paradise,"² nor as the Absolute Being who ontologically differs from the sentient beings but rather as the Power which makes man aware of his own karmic nature. Shinran states in his *Kyō-gyō-shin-shō*: "There are two kinds of bodies in Dharma. One is called the Dharma-body, and the other the Expedient-body."³ Dharma, as being immanent, appears as the Expedient-body and

manifests itself as individual faith. At the same time, Dharma, as being transcendent, manifests itself as Amida and His Vows. Therefore, faith becomes the "Monmyō," which means both "hearing of the Name" and at the same time "believing." Through the Power of Amida a devotee becomes aware of his evil nature and immediately takes refuge in the true Heart of Amida with deep reverence and singleness of heart and having no trace of doubt in the mind. At this moment his faith is established.

By emphasizing the one-thought-moment of faith, which itself is the work of the "Other" Power of Amida, Shinran seems to undermine the traditional Buddhist concept of faith which Professor Walpola Rahula points out as follows:

In Buddhist texts there is a word 'saddhā' (Sanskrit - Śraddhā) which is usually translated as 'faith' or 'belief.' But 'saddhā' is not 'faith' as such, but 'confidence' born out of conviction. In popular Buddhism and also in ordinary usage in the texts the word 'saddhā,' it must be admitted, has an element of, 'faith' in the sense that it signifies devotion to the Buddha, the Dhamma (Teaching) and the Sangha (The Order).⁴

The traditional concept of faith emphasized self-power rather than Power from the "other," which Shinran understands as the Absolute Power of Amida's Vows.

Shinran somewhat undermines also the importance of the Bodhi-mind (Buddha-nature) as an inherent quality of man. This question of faith and the Buddha-nature was dealt with extensively by Shinran himself as one of his central themes. I have not been able to explore this question satisfactorily in this dissertation. According to Shinran, however, these two questions are not two separate questions but the two aspects of one and the same question; namely, the question of how to understand the Buddha-nature. As Shinran himself points out, faith is not the work of one's self-power but the work of the Expedient-body of Dharma. The Absolute, "Other" Power of Amida reveals itself as the Expedient-body and manifests itself as one's faith. Furthermore, it is not I who seek the Expedient-body, but it is the Expedient-body who seeks and enables me to hear His Name. This is what Shinran meant by the Commands of Amida's Summoning (弥陀招喚勅命). In such

case, the question is not who hears but rather what is it to hear the Calling of Amida. Shinran answers the question in saying:

Nirvāṇa is Extinction (滅度). The Unfailing attainment of Extinction is the Eternal Bliss. The Eternal Bliss is the Ultimate Tranquility and Thusness. Thusness is the Buddha-nature. The Buddha-nature is Tathāgata. Tathāgata is filled in this universe and in the minds of all sentient beings.⁵

It is the minds of all sentient beings (一切有情の心) to which the Calling of Amida (弥陀招喚) is transmitted. In other words, Shinran understood that the Buddha-nature is present in the minds of all sentient beings. It belongs to all sentient beings rather than to an individual being. The Buddha-nature is universal and transcendental rather than individual and immanent. Therefore, when the Calling of Amida (弥陀招喚の声) is transmitted it is to the Buddha-nature and it becomes at that moment individual faith, an awareness of one's unsavable nature which has nevertheless been saved by Amida.

What I have introduced here does not possibly exhaust Shinran's deep concepts of faith and the Buddha-nature. These profound and complex experienced realities must be dealt with separately and extensively at some other time.

Another area which requires extensive research and clarification is the concept of faith in Shinran and the Christian notion of faith. Because of striking resemblances, as I pointed out, between expositions by protestant theologians and Shinran concerning faith, grace, and salvation, quickly drawn conclusions and criticisms have been made in the past. For instance, Dr. Karl Barth in the *Church Dogmatics* refers to the thoughts of Shinran and Hōnen as "Japanese Protestantism."⁶ Barth's comments are not well-founded. Indeed they are misleading. My research, recorded here, provides the basis for a comparative study of Shinran and Protestant Reformers.

NOTES

CHAPTER IV

- ¹ T. Watsuji, *The Climate*, (風土), published in Japanese, pp. 56-57.
- ² B. Uyeda, *The Japanese Dictionary* (大日本国辞典), Vol. I, p. 149.
- ³ Arnold Toynbee, *An An Historian's Approach to Religion* (London: Oxford University Press, 1956), p. 284.
- ⁴ *Mahā Nirvāṇasūtra*, SSZ, Vol. p. 125.
- ⁵ Gen Nakamura, *The Buddhas Words*, (仏陀のことば), published in Japanese, p. 191.
- ⁶ Gen Nakamura, Gautama Buddha, (ゴータマ・ブッタ), published in Japanese, p. 114.
- ⁷ Suttanipata, Taisho, Vol. II, No. 99, pp. 616-617, (若仏出世, 若未出世, 此法常住, 法住法界),
- ⁸ M. Yamaguchi, *The Introoduction to Buddhism*, (仏教学序説), published in Japanese, p. 63.
- ⁹ A. William, *A Sanskrit-English Dicionary* p. 519.
- ¹⁰ K. Nishida, *Philosophy of Nothingness*, p. 239.
- ¹¹ A. William, *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, p. 129.
- ¹² Nāgārjuna, *Igyōbon*, SSZ, Vol. I, p. 257.
- ¹³ Kosho Yamamoto, *The Holy Scripture of Shinshū*, compiled by the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii, p. 328.
- ¹⁴ Nāgārjuna, *Igyōbon*, SSZ, Vol. I, p. 254.
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 258.
- ¹⁶ Shinran, *Kyō-gyō-shin-shō*, SSZ, Vol. II, p. 9.
- ¹⁷ Vasubandhu, *Jōdoron*, SSZ, Vol. I, p. 270.
- ¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 277.
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 270-271.
- ²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 271.
- ²¹ Zōbō (像法). One of the three-fold scheme of periodization. They are Shōbō, Zōbō, and Mappō, or the Ages of Right, Semblance, Decadent Dharma.
- ²² Donran, *Ōjōronchū*, SSZ, Vol. I, p. 307.
- ²³ Dōshaku, *Anrakushū* SSZ, Vol. I, p. 382.
- ²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 422.
- ²⁵ Zendō, *Gengibun*, SSZ, Vol. I, p. 457.
- ²⁶ Zendō, *Sanzengi*, SSZ, Vol. I, p. 534.

- ²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 538.
- ²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 538.
- ²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 537.
- ³⁰ Genshin, *Ōjōyōshū*, SSZ, Vol. I, p. 809.
- ³¹ *Tannishō*, SSZ, Vol. II, p. 777.
- ³² Genshin, *Ōjōyōshū*, SSZ, Vol. I, p. 888.
- ³³ Six merits of the Buddha are: (1) the merit of a well-cultivated field that can produce a good harvest, (2) the merit of being the most beneficial, (3) the merit of the most supreme being among all beings, (4) the merit of the most rare being, (5) the merit of only being in the universe, and (6) the merit of the possessor of the knowledge which is transcendent and immanent.
- ³⁴ Tokatsu-hell is the hell which includes all kinds of sufferings and pains. It is Samjivah in Sanskrit.
- ³⁵ Kokujyo-hell. The word "kokujyo" means literally a "black (steel) rope." It is Kala-sutrah, meaning "black rope" in Sanskrit.
- ³⁶ Shugo-hell. Shugo or Samghatah in Sanskrit means "to gather."
- ³⁷ Kyokan-hell. Kyokan or Rauravah means "cry or screams."
- ³⁸ Daikyokan-hell. Dai means "great." It is Mahā in Sanskrit.
- ³⁹ Shonetsu-hell. Shonetsu or Tapanah means "heat or scorching heat."
- ⁴⁰ Daishonetsu-hell. Dai stands for "great."
- ⁴¹ Muken-hell. Muken or Avichi means "no limit" meaning very bottom. Since this hell is located at the very bottom of all other hells, it is called Avichi-hell.
- ⁴² Yojana. One yojana is about 6 miles.
- ⁴³ Genshin, *Ōjōyōshū*, SSZ, Vol. I, p. 730.
- ⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 882.
- ⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 729.
- ⁴⁶ Genkū, *Senjyakushū*, SSZ, Vol. I, p. 932.
- ⁴⁷ Shinran, *Wasan*, SSZ, Vol. II, p. 529.
- ⁴⁸ Genkū, *Senjyakushū*, SSZ, Vol. I, p. 935.
- ⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 946.
- ⁵⁰ *Daijugatsuzōkyō* is sometimes called *Daihodo-daijugatsuzōkyō* or *Candra-grbhav-aipulya*.
- ⁵¹ Shinran, *The Epistles*. SSZ, translated by D. T. Suzuki, Vol. III, p. 770.
- ⁵² Senye Inagi, *Tariki Honganron*, 他力本願論, p. 264.
- ⁵³ Five skandhas, or five aggregates, i. e., the five components of a

sentient being. They are form, perception, conception, volition, and consciousness. The first is material and the rest are mental.

⁵⁴ Gibun Uyeda, *The Concept of Karma in Buddhism*, 仏教における業の思想, p. 56.

⁵⁵ Senye Inagi, *Tariki Honganron*, 他力本願論, p. 269.

⁵⁶ Rudolph Bultmann, *Kerygma and Myth*, translated by Reginald Fuller (New York: Harper and Row), p. 25.

⁵⁷ Kitaro Nishida, *Philosophy of Nothingness*, p. 235.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 235.

⁵⁹ D. T. Suzuki, *The Shin Sect of Buddhism*, p. 248.

⁶⁰ Ken Sakurabe, *About the Meaning of 'Gyō Appeared in Early Buddhist Scriptures*, 初期仏典にあらわれた「行」の語について, 仏教における行の問題, 日本仏教学会編, p. 37.

⁶¹ *Tannishō*, SSZ, Vol. I, p. 774.

⁶² 念仏

⁶³ 衆生憶念仏、仏憶念衆生。

⁶⁴ Rudolph Bultmann, *Kerygma and Myth, or Form Criticism*, p. 26.

⁶⁵ D. T. Suzuki, *The Shin Sect of Buddhism, The Eastern Buddhist*, Vol. VII, July, 1939, pp. 245-246.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 265.

⁶⁷ Kakunyo, Hoonko-shiki, SSZ, Vol. III, p. 657.

⁶⁸ Shinran, *Tannishō*, SSZ, Vol. II, pp. 792-793.

CHAPTER V

¹ Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, Vol. I, part 2, p. 340.

² *Ibid.*, p. 340.

³ Shinran, *Kyō-gyō-shin-shō*, SSZ, Vol. II, p. 111.

⁴ Walpola Rahula, *What the Buddha Taught*, p. 8.

⁵ Shinran, *Yuishinshō-moni*, SSZ, Vol. II, p. 48.6

⁶ Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, Vol. I, part 2, p. 342.

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VITA

Name : Shinei, Nobuhide, Shigefuji

Date and Place of Birth: April 19, 1933
Fukuoka City, Japan

Education:

Ryukoku University, Kyoto, Japan, B. A. 1956
Columbia University, New York, 1956-1957
Northwestern University, 1970, M. A.
Northwestern University, 1974, Ph. D.

Professional Experience:

Minister, Seabrook Buddhist Church
Seabrook, New Jersey, 1957-1962
Minister, New York Buddhist Church .
New York City, 1963-1966
Minister, Midwest Buddhist Church
Chigagco, 1967-1971
Teaching Assistant, Department of History and
Literature of Religions, Northwestern University,
1969-1971
Assistant Professor, University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire,
1971-1973
Assistant Professor, Arizona State University,
Tempe, Arizona, 1973-1976
Minister, Tacoma Buddhist Church
Tacoma, Washington, 1976-1978
Minister, Toronto Buddhist Church
Toronto, Ontario, Canada, 1978 to Present